

REMARKS**Status of the Claims**

Claims 1-25 are currently present in the Application, and claims 1, 9, 15, and 21-25 are independent claims. Claims 1-2, 9-10, 15-16, and 21-24 have been amended, no claims have been canceled, and no claims have been added.

Applicants are not conceding in this Application that the subject matter encompassed by the claims prior to this amendment is not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution of the present Application. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue additional claims, including the subject matter encompassed by the claims as originally filed, in one or more continuations and/or divisional patent applications.

Drawings

Applicants note that the Examiner did not indicate whether the formal drawings, filed with Applicants' application, are accepted by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner indicate whether the formal drawings are accepted in the next office communication.

Specification Objections

The specification stands objected to as failing to provide antecedent basis for claims 15 and 24-25. Applicants have amended claims 15 and 24-25 in Applicants' response filed January 9, 2008 accordingly and request removal of the objections to these claims.

Claim Objections Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 3, 8, 14, and 20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention. Applicants have amended claims 3, 8, 14, and 20 in Applicants' response filed January 9, 2008 accordingly and request removal of the 112 rejection to these claims.

Claims 4-7, 11-13, 17-19, and 21-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as their invention. Applicants have amended claims 4-7, 11-13, 17-19, and 21-25 in Applicants' response filed January 9, 2008 accordingly and request removal of the 112 rejection to these claims.

Claim Rejections - Alleged Anticipation Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Gross et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,283,856, hereinafter "Gross"). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections. Applicants have amended claim 1 to describe claim 1's limitations from a server perspective. Support for such amendment may be found in Applicants' specification on page 17, line 25 through page 18, line 8 and, therefore, no new matter is added with such amendment. As amended, claim 1 is a method claim with limitations comprising:

- invoking a collaborative discussion by providing a distributed presentation to a plurality of users;
- receiving a first message from one of the plurality of users that includes a rule, the first message associated with the distributed presentation but separate from the distributed presentation;
- identifying a subset of the plurality of users that correspond to the rule;
- forwarding the first message and the rule to the identified users;
- receiving a second message and a modification of the forwarded rule from one of the identified users; and
- sending the second message and the modified forwarded rule to one or more subsequent users that correspond to the modified forwarded rule.

Applicants invoke a collaborative discussion by providing a distributed presentation to a plurality of users, such as with Lotus e-Meeting or Windows NetMeeting. In contrast, Gross discloses a rule-based messaging system, such as email, but Gross does not disclose providing a distributed presentation to a plurality of users. The Office Action uses an excerpt in Gross to reject Applicants' original

“collaborative discussion” limitation but, after further review, the excerpt merely discloses a rule-based mail messaging system. Gross states:

“A flexible, event driven and conditional rule based mail messaging system which can be transparently implemented for use in electronic mail applications.” (Abstract)

As can be seen from the above excerpt, Gross’s “collaborative discussion” is sending email messages, which is not the same as “*invoking a collaborative discussion by providing a distributed presentation to a plurality of users*” as claimed by Applicants.

In addition, Applicants receive a message from one of the plurality of users that includes a rule. The message is associated with the distributed presentation but separate from the distributed presentation. For example, a user may have a question pertaining to one of the slides included in the presentation. The Office Action points to various locations in Gross to reject Applicants’ original “message” limitation but, after further review, Gross merely teaches email message management based upon rules. As such, Gross never teaches “*receiving a first message from one of the plurality of users that includes a rule, the first message associated with the distributed presentation but separate from the distributed presentation*” as claimed by Applicants.

Furthermore, Applicants permit a recipient client to modify a rule received from another user and, in turn, use the modified rule to send subsequent messages to other users. The Office Action points to various locations to Gross to reject Applicants’ “rule modification” limitation but, after further review, Gross discloses approaches for creating rules but, however, none of which are based upon modifying a rule received from another user. Gross states:

“Within the system, rules are created in two ways according to the WHEN->IF->THEN construct. A form version of rules...provides the rule designer or user with a form having specific fields for the designer to fill in by selection, to create the rule(s)...An alternative rule design format... uses a text mode within the rule editor, in which the rule designer must have familiarity with rule syntax.” (col. 9, lines 51-61, emphasis added)

As can be seen from the above excerpt, Gross discloses two approaches for a user to generate rules. However, neither of these approaches teach nor suggest *“receiving a second message and **a modification of the forwarded rule** from one of the identified users”* as claimed by Applicants.

Therefore, since Gross does not teach or suggest, either in whole or in part, all the limitations included in Applicants' claim 1 as amended, amended claim 1 is allowable over Gross. Claims 9 and 23 are information handling system claims including similar limitations as claim 1 and, therefore, are allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable. Claims 15 and 24-25 are computer program product claims including similar limitations as claim 1 and, therefore, are allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable. Claims 21-22 are method claims including similar limitations as claim 1 and, therefore, are allowable for at least the same reasons that claim 1 is allowable.

Each of claims 2-8, 10-14, and 16-20 depend, either directly or indirectly, upon one of the allowable independent claims 1, 9, or 15. Therefore, each of claims 2-8, 10-14, and 16-20 are allowable for at least the same reasons that their respective independent claims are allowable.

Conclusion

As a result of the foregoing, it is asserted by Applicants that the remaining claims in the Application are in condition for allowance, and Applicants respectfully request an early allowance of such claims.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the Applicants' attorney listed below if the Examiner believes that such a discussion would be helpful in resolving any remaining questions or issues related to this Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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